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USCIS Civics Flash Cards

These Civics Flash Cards will help immigrants learn about U.S. history and government while preparing for the naturalization test. These flash cards can also be used in the classroom as an instructional tool for citizenship preparation.

IMPORTANT NOTE: On the naturalization test, some answers may change because of elections or appointments. Applicants must be aware of the most current answers to these questions. Applicants must answer these questions with the name of the official who is serving at the time of his or her eligibility interview with USCIS. The USCIS Officer will not accept an incorrect answer.
The 100 civics (history and government) questions and answers for the naturalization test are included in these flash cards. The civics test is an oral test and the USCIS Officer will ask the applicant up to 10 of the 100 civics questions. An applicant must answer 6 out of 10 questions correctly to pass the civics portion of the naturalization test.

Although USCIS is aware that there may be additional correct answers to the 100 civics questions, applicants are encouraged to respond to the civics questions using the answers provided on these flash cards.

If you are 65 years old or older and have been a legal permanent resident of the United States for 20 or more years, you may study just the questions that have been marked with an asterisk (*).
Question 1

What is the supreme law of the land?
The Constitution of the United States.
Courtesy of the National Archives.
Question 2

What does the Constitution do?
sets up the government
defines the government
protects basic rights of Americans

The National Mall in Washington, D.C., seen from the observation area of the Washington Monument, circa 1945.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USW31-058713-C.
The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?
We the People

“We the People,” the first three words of the preamble to the Constitution of the United States. Courtesy of the National Archives.
What is an amendment?
a change (to the Constitution)

an addition (to the Constitution)

The 20th Amendment to the Constitution.
What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
the Bill of Rights
What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?*
A newspaper stand in 1941.

Speech
Religion
Assembly
Press
Petition the government

A newspaper stand in 1941.
Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USF346-BN-001359-Q-C.
Question
7

How many amendments does the Constitution have?
twenty-seven
(27)

Portrait of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, seated, and Susan B. Anthony, standing, advocates for the rights of women to vote.

What did the Declaration of Independence do?
announced our independence (from Great Britain)

declared our independence (from Great Britain)

said that the United States is free (from Great Britain)

What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?
★ life
★ liberty
★ pursuit of happiness
Question 10

What is freedom of religion?
You can practice any religion, or not practice a religion.

A synagogue on Yom Kippur, circa 1900.
What is the economic system in the United States?*
capitalist economy
market economy
What is the “rule of law”?
Everyone must follow the law.
Leaders must obey the law.
Government must obey the law.
No one is above the law.

The Contemplation of Justice statue outside the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C.
Courtesy of the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.
Question 13

Name one branch or part of the government.*
The U.S. Capitol (legislative branch) and the U.S. Supreme Court (judicial branch) buildings in Washington, D.C.
What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?
checks and balances
separation of powers
Question 15

Who is in charge of the executive branch?
Who makes federal laws?
Congress
Senate and House (of Representatives)
(U.S. or national) legislature

The U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.
What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?*
the Senate and House (of Representatives)

Aerial view of the west front of the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.
Courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol.
Question 18

How many U.S. Senators are there?
one hundred (100)

The Senators of the 109th Congress.
Courtesy of the U.S. Senate Photo Studio.
We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?
six (6)

Senate hearing on the confirmation of John G. Roberts, Jr. in 2005.

Courtesy of the U.S. Senate Historical Office.
Who is one of your state’s U.S. Senators now?*
Answers will vary.

[District of Columbia residents and residents of U.S. territories should answer that D.C. (or the territory where the applicant lives) has no U.S. Senators.]

Hiram Revels of Mississippi became the first African American Senator in 1870.

Question 21

The House of Representatives has how many voting members?
President George W. Bush delivering the State of the Union Address before a joint session of Congress, January 23, 2007.

Courtesy of the U.S. House of Representatives, Office of Photography.
We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?
Question 23

Name your U.S. Representative.
Answers will vary.

[Residents of territories with nonvoting Delegates or Resident Commissioners may provide the name of that Delegate or Commissioner. Also acceptable is any statement that the territory has no (voting) Representatives in Congress.]

Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to be elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Who does a U.S. Senator represent?
all people of the state
Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?
(because of) the state’s population
(because) they have more people
(because) some states have more people

The Rotunda of the U.S. Capitol.
Courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol.
We elect a President for how many years?
The inauguration of President Theodore Roosevelt on March 4, 1905.
Question 27

In what month do we vote for President?*
November
What is the name of the President of the United States now?*

What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?
Joe Biden is sworn in as the 47th vice president of the United States in Washington, D.C., January 20, 2009.

U.S. Department of Defense photo by
If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?
the Vice President

Swearing in of Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson as president aboard Air Force One following the death of President John F. Kennedy on November 22, 1963.

Courtesy of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, photo by Cecil Stoughton.
If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?
The Rostrum, a place for public speaking, is the location from which the Speaker of the House presides. Courtesy of the Architect of the Capitol.
Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?
President Franklin D. Roosevelt reviewing American troops in Casablanca, Morocco during World War II.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USW33-027834-ZC.
Who signs bills to become laws?
President Lyndon B. Johnson signing the Immigration Act of 1965 on October 3rd of that same year, Liberty Island, NY.
Courtesy of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum.
Who vetoes bills?
the President

The White House in Washington, D.C.
What does the President’s Cabinet do?
advises the President

What are **two** Cabinet-level positions?
Secretary of Agriculture
Secretary of Commerce
Secretary of Defense
Secretary of Education
Secretary of Energy
Secretary of Health and Human Services
Secretary of Homeland Security
Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
Secretary of the Interior
Secretary of Labor
Secretary of State
Secretary of Transportation
Secretary of the Treasury
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
Attorney General
Vice President
Question 37

What does the judicial branch do?
★ reviews laws
★ explains laws
★ resolves disputes (disagreements)
★ decides if a law goes against the Constitution

The Courtroom of the U.S. Supreme Court building, where the Court has sat since 1935.
Courtesy of the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.
Question 38

What is the highest court in the United States?
the Supreme Court

West facade of the U.S. Supreme Court building in Washington, D.C.
Courtesy of the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.
Question 39

How many justices are on the Supreme Court?
There are nine justices on the Supreme Court: eight associate justices and one chief justice.

Courtesy of the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.
Who is the Chief Justice of the United States now?
John Roberts
(John G. Roberts, Jr.)

Chief Justice John G. Roberts, Jr.
Courtesy of the Collection of the Supreme Court of the United States.
Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of the federal government?
to print money

to declare war

to create an army

to make treaties

President Woodrow Wilson asking Congress to declare war on Germany, April 2, 1917.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-10297.
Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?
provide schooling and education
provide protection (police)
provide safety (fire departments)
give a driver’s license
approve zoning and land use
Question 43

Who is the Governor of your state now?
Answers will vary.

[District of Columbia residents should answer that D.C. does not have a Governor.]
What is the capital of your state?*
Answers will vary.

[District of Columbia residents should answer that D.C. is not a state and does not have a capital. Residents of U.S. territories should name the capital of the territory.]
What are the two major political parties in the United States?*
Democratic and Republican

Question 46

What is the political party of the President now?
Democratic (Party)

Attendees at the 1916 Democratic National Convention in St. Louis, MO.

What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?
Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.
Courtesy of the Office of U.S. Representative Paul D. Ryan.
There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.
Citizens eighteen (18) and older (can vote).

You don’t have to pay (a poll tax) to vote.

Any citizen can vote. (Women and men can vote.)

A male citizen of any race (can vote).

Question 49

What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?*
serve on a jury
vote in a federal election
Name one right only for United States citizens.
vote in a federal election
run for federal office

Congressman George W. Johnson of West Virginia with a Boy Scout band from his state, June 4, 1924.
What are **two** rights of everyone living in the United States?
freedom of expression
freedom of speech
freedom of assembly
freedom to petition the government
freedom of religion
the right to bear arms

Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy speaking at a racial equality demonstration outside the Justice Department on June 14, 1963.
Question 52

What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?
the United States

the flag

A young boy pledging allegiance at a naturalization ceremony in 1962.

Courtesy of the USCIS Historical Library, BK9.4, Item 112.
What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?
★ give up loyalty to other countries
★ defend the Constitution and laws of the United States
★ obey the laws of the United States
★ serve in the U.S. military (if needed)
★ serve (do important work for) the nation (if needed)
★ be loyal to the United States
Question 54

How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?*
eighteen (18) and older
What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?
vote
join a political party
help with a campaign
join a civic group
join a community group
give an elected official your opinion on an issue
call Senators and Representatives
publicly support or oppose an issue or policy
run for office
write to a newspaper
Question 56

When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?*
When must all men register for the Selective Service?
• at age eighteen (18)
• between eighteen (18) and twenty-six (26)

World War I draft registration card of Irving Berlin, an American composer who became a naturalized citizen in 1918. Courtesy of the National Archives.
What is one reason colonists came to America?
★ freedom
★ political liberty
★ religious freedom
★ economic opportunity
★ practice their religion
★ escape persecution

Question 59

Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?
American Indians

Native Americans

American Indian woman and her baby in 1899.
What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?
Africans

people from Africa

Slaves on a Southern plantation in May 1862.
Question 61

Why did the colonists fight the British?
because of high taxes (taxation without representation)
because the British army stayed in their houses (boarding, quartering)
because they didn’t have self-government

Molly Pitcher firing a cannon at the Battle of Monmouth in 1778 during the American Revolutionary War by Percy Moran. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, LC-USZC4-4969.
Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?
(Thomas) Jefferson

When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?
July 4, 1776

In “Declaration of Independence,” a painting by John Trumbull, Thomas Jefferson and his committee present the formal statement of independence from Great Britain.

Courtesy of the National Archives, NARA File # 148-GW-662.
There were 13 original states. Name three.
New Hampshire
Massachusetts
Rhode Island
Connecticut
New York
New Jersey
Pennsylvania
Delaware
Maryland
Virginia
North Carolina
South Carolina
Georgia
What happened at the Constitutional Convention?
The Constitution was written.

The Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution.

Question 66

When was the Constitution written?
Independence Hall in Philadelphia, PA, where the Constitution was signed in 1787.
The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.
★ (James) Madison
★ (Alexander) Hamilton
★ (John) Jay
★ Publius

Title page of The Federalist, vol. 1, 1799.
What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?
★ U.S. diplomat
★ oldest member of the Constitutional Convention
★ first Postmaster General of the United States

★ writer of “Poor Richard’s Almanac”
★ started the first free libraries

Question 69

Who is the “Father of Our Country”? 
Courtesy of the U.S. Senate, Catalog # 31.00002.000.
Who was the first President?*
(George) Washington

“Washington Crossing the Delaware,”
by Emanuel Leutze.
Courtesy of the National Archives,
NARA File # 066-G-15D-25.
What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?
★ the Louisiana Territory
★ Louisiana

Map of the Louisiana Purchase Territory.
Courtesy of the National Archives.
Question 72

Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.
Question 73

Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.
★ the Civil War
★ the War between the States

Name one problem that led to the Civil War.
• slavery
• economic reasons
• states’ rights

Civil War Confederate
General Robert E. Lee.

What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?*
freed the slaves (Emancipation Proclamation)
saved (or preserved) the Union
led the United States during the Civil War

Abraham Lincoln.
What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?
freed the slaves
freed slaves in the Confederacy
freed slaves in the Confederate states

Question 77

What did Susan B. Anthony do?
Susan B. Anthony.

Name **one** war fought by the United States in the 1900s.*
World War I
World War II
Korean War
Vietnam War
(Persian) Gulf War

Question 79

Who was President during World War I?
President Woodrow Wilson.
Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?
President Franklin D. Roosevelt signing the Declaration of War against Japan on December 8, 1941.

Courtesy of the National Archives.
Who did the United States fight in World War II?
Japan, Germany, and Italy

Surrender of Japan, September 2, 1945. General Douglas MacArthur signs as Supreme Allied Commander during formal surrender ceremonies aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay.

Courtesy of the National Archives.
Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?
World War II

Courtesy of the National Archives.
During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?
Communism

Germans from East and West stand on the Berlin Wall in front of the Brandenburg Gate in this November 10, 1989 photo, one day after the wall opened. The Berlin Wall was a symbol of the tyranny that restrained freedom throughout the Communist bloc of Eastern Europe during the Cold War.

AP Images/STF.
What movement tried to end racial discrimination?
civil rights (movement)

What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?*
* fought for civil rights
* worked for equality for all Americans

Martin Luther King, Jr.
What major event happened on September 11, 2001, in the United States?
Terrorists attacked the United States.

Firefighters unfurl a large American flag over the scarred stone of the Pentagon on September 12, 2001. White House photo by Paul Morse.
Question 87

Name **one** American Indian tribe in the United States.
Cherokee
Navajo
Sioux
Chippewa
Choctaw
Pueblo
Apache
Iroquois
Creek
Blackfeet
Seminole
Cheyenne
Arawak
Shawnee
Mohegan
Huron
Oneida
Lakota
Crow
Teton
Hopi
Inuit

Name **one** of the two longest rivers in the United States.
Missouri (River)

Mississippi (River)

The Mississippi River near Minneapolis, MN.
Question 89

What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?
Pacific (Ocean)

View of the Pacific Ocean from Big Sur, CA, near Bixby Creek Bridge.
What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?
Atlantic (Ocean)

Portland Head Light in Cape Elizabeth, ME.
Question 91

Name one U.S. territory.
Puerto Rico
U.S. Virgin Islands
American Samoa
Northern Mariana Islands
Guam

Old Spanish Bridge in Umatac, Guam.
Courtesy of the Office of U.S. Representative Madeleine Z. Bordallo.
Name one state that borders Canada.
Question 93

Name **one** state that borders Mexico.
Question 94

What is the capital of the United States?*
Washington, D.C.

A view of Washington, D.C., from Virginia, across the Potomac River. The view shows the Lincoln Memorial, the Washington Monument, and the U.S. Capitol.
Where is the Statue of Liberty?*
New York (Harbor)

Liberty Island

[Also acceptable are New Jersey, near New York City, and on the Hudson (River).]
Question 96

Why does the flag have 13 stripes?
because there were 13 original colonies

because the stripes represent the original colonies
Why does the flag have 50 stars?*
because there is one star for each state

because there are 50 states

because each star represents a state
What is the name of the national anthem?
The Star-Spangled Banner

Question 99

When do we celebrate Independence Day?*
July 4

Patriotic celebration at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.
Name **two** national U.S. holidays.
New Year’s Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Presidents’ Day
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Columbus Day
Veterans Day
Thanksgiving
Christmas

Atlantic Pavilion at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.
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